                               Highlights

      ~ From the Editor's Desk   ~ CPU Report
      ~ PAGESTREAM - Version 1.5   ~ FALCON F-16 Part II
      ~ Inside * NeoDesk II *   ~ PUBLISH! -> UNFAIR!!
      ~ ST REPORT CONFIDENTIAL   ~ DONGLE DILEMMA!

              **** PAGESTREAM 1.5 -> "GOOD STUFF!!" ****

              ****   TOUCH-UP ..DONGLED! ****

   ===
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   ===

From the Editor's Desk:

     Economy in programming is not a new subject, but since we now have
an ST with up to 4mb in ram memory, must the "overhead" become so huge?
Remember when programmers in general were extremely careful about how they

put the code together? They made sure they used just what was needed and
always "cleaned up" the code and made it as size efficient as possible. I
have been told a good rule of thumb is; "if when you Arc a program it's
size decreases appreciably it needs to be reworked". Having seen both
extremes (the results when arcing programs) it is entirely believeable
that some of the rather "largish" programs out there could use a little
"housekeeping".....what's your opinion?

        Atari, once again, has managed to allow itself to become surrounded
in rumor (unfounded or not). Perhaps the time has come for Atari to
establish a Information Release Office where the public can obtain
information directly from "the horses mouth" and thus, pay no attention to
the rumor mill. Even though the rumors are "good" rumors it is sad to see
vital information being forced to reach the userbase via "the back yard
fence" when the front door would lend so much more credibility and
strength the real story.

        Hopefully, Atari is going to sell Federated Stores, after all, if
one were to look back at the track record (forget the profits or
NON-profits posted by Federated) of the store employees and the desires
of the management to upgrade the competence of those employees...it is a
sad story of total incompetence caused by insecurity of the Federated
management and the "I don't give a darn" attitude of floor workers of
Federated. Both of the examples are strong indicators of poor management
on the part of the parent company. As stated, it's good Atari is going to
get back into the business of making and selling computers ..totally.

                            'Till next time...

                               Ralph...

                        "1989 - ATARI'S QUEST"

****

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CPU REPORTâ ¢
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Issue #5

By Michael Arthur

Remember When:

     In Early 1981, Microsoft bought a version of CP/M for the Intel 8086
chip that had been developed by Seattle Computer (another CP/M OEM) for
the sum of $50,000.00, later licensing it to IBM for release in their new
IBM PC, around August 1981?

CPU INSIGHTSâ ¢
============
                    Rebels with a Cause: EISA and the OSF

Part II

     In Part I of this series, I explored the industry's dilemma of
incorporating new technologies in computers, while dealing with the issue
of compatibility with existing standards, and the rough decision as to
when a new standard needs to be established. I used IBM's MicroChannel
as an example of this. Now I will examine the various aspects of the EISA
bus. In this issue I will also show the OSF's efforts to improve UNIX,
and how they conflict with AT&T's.

              EISA and the MicroChannel: Two Divergent Paths

     Immediately after the introduction of the EISA bus, support for the
Gang of Nine's innovation had begun to filter in from all areas of the
IBM market. By year's end, over 100 computer and peripheral companies had
announced their efforts to develop products for the EISA bus, some of
which would use its multimaster capabilities.

     But many of these EISA-compatible computers will probably differ in
their EISA implementations. Advanced Logic Research, in particular, is
an example of this. ALR is developing a 33 MHZ 80386 EISA computer that
has 64-bit wide address and data paths, making this computer faster than
the ordinary EISA bus (which has 32-bit wide address/data paths). And
although most of the other computer makers developing EISA-based computers
won't be shipping them for several months, ALR is planning to introduce
its computer in the Second Quarter of 1989, thereby becoming the first

company to ship an EISA-based computer. In comparison, several of the
EISA-specific expansion boards will be available around Fall 1989.

        The reason that computers and peripherals involving the EISA bus
will be available so quickly (as compared with the slow introduction of
MicroChannel products) is because the EISA "standard" is not actually
integrated silicon, but a fully detailed set of specifications. While
there are advantages to this method, as present PC AT cards can be easily
modified to be EISA-specific, it is an almost certainty that compatibility
problems could arise between EISA-specific cards and EISA-based computers.

        IBM's Chet Heath, the chief designer of the MicroChannel, has made
the point that PC AT bus technology is obsolete, and that attempting to
merge 32-bit address/data paths and multimaster technology with this aging
standard could cause serious technical problems. This is true.

        One of the reasons that the PC AT bus is considered obsolete is that
its design, originating in the early 1980's, only had a bandwidth of about
25-30 MHZ. The EISA bus improves this, having a limit of 35-40 MHZ. In
comparison, while the NuBus has a bandwidth of 40 MHZ, it can be speeded
up with faster circuitry (an option not available to the EISA, due to the
intrinsic design), and the MicroChannel bus can theoretically go up to an
80 MHZ bandwidth.

        And given that the EISA specs must go through great extremes to cram
MicroChannel-like features onto the aging PC AT bus, the possibility
exists that IBM saw what would happen if they tried to do all this, and
decided not to risk it. Incidentally, the MicroChannel's design is based
on previous technology contained in IBM mainframes.

        But technical issues aside, it seems that the main issue with the
EISA and MicroChannel buses is industry politics. Ever since the EISA
bus was introduced, Compaq and IBM have been engaged in verbal skirmishes
over these two technologies. Compaq has stated that the present AT bus
(and their EISA superset) will serve almost all computing needs for years
to come, while IBM has maintained that the AT bus is an obsolete and aging
technology that needs to be completely replaced by the more powerful and
sophisticated MicroChannel bus. These "turf wars" have tended to get
pretty nasty, with Compaq calling the MicroChannel the "PC equivalent of
New Coke", and IBM derising the EISA bus as simply Compaq's attempt to
force IBM into setting up better licensing agreements for cloning the
MicroChannel.

And.. interestingly enough, both of these arguments are quite provable..

        Also, Compaq has pointed out that none of the multimaster designs
for either the EISA or MicroChannel Bus will be widely available until
late 1989, and that when they are around, that boards using them will be
targeted towards the workstation/high-end part of the PC market. Meaning
that most PC owners will not need either EISA or the MicroChannel, and
will probably stick to the present AT Bus standard.

        But all the industry politics surrounding the EISA and MicroChannel
is really not about the merits of either architecture, but on how they
should be handled. The Gang of Nine is giving the EISA specs to any

computer company that wants them for a nominal fee, while IBM (in the
decision that led up to the EISA bus) is asking for royalties of up to
5 percent on sales of MicroChannel Clones. Maybe it is IBM's policy, not
IBM's innovation, that is the real issue....

                   AT&T, the OSF, and the Course of UNIX

        In May 1988,seven of the most influential Unix Developers, including
IBM, Hewlett Packard, DEC, and German computer maker Siemens Inc.,
announced the formation of the Open Software Foundation, or OSF. The
stated goal of the OSF is to openly develop an alternate systems/software
standard for Unix. The catch: AT&T, the owner and licensee of Unix, has
refused to join the OSF, and in fact, is developing a new version of Unix
with Sun Microsystems.

        To understand why these large computer companies (any one of which
owns a significant segment of the Unix market) are rebelling against the
originator and principal owner of Unix, AT&T, it is necessary to go back
to the beginning.

        Unix was originally made to be a multiprocessor standard, with its
licensees having equal access to a growing operating system which would be
managed and improved by AT&T to take advantage of the latest innovations
in computer technology.

        But as time went on, AT&T did not compile such a good record of
keeping Unix up to date. This resulted in Unix derivatives like Xenix and
Berkeley Unix arising to meet these needs. These Unix dialects weren't
that compatible, and Unix users were forced to fragment. Things remained
stable for a while, but as innovations in user interfaces, graphics, and
Unix itself emerged, the need arose for a new version of Unix which would
both take advantage of these innovations and merge these "Unixes" into a
cohesive, well defined standard.

        Seeing this need, AT&T announced that it was making such a system,
in Unix Version 5.4, which would merge Berkeley Unix 4.2/4.3, AT&T Unix
Version 5.3, and Microsoft Xenix, therefore establishing a solid Unix
standard, and would also use a new graphic user interface for Unix, called
Open Look. One small detail: Open Look was developed by Sun Microsystems,
and they alone are helping AT&T make its new Unix. Meaning that Sun would
become the most important Unix licensee (and the most profitable).

        Another thing is that Sun was also developing the SPARC, a new RISC
(Reduced Instruction Set Chip) processor, and AT&T had mentioned that
Unix Version 5.4 might take advantage of its special features.

        So faced with the problems of Sun being allowed to set the course of
Unix in an exclusive partnership with AT&T (thereby becoming the leading
Unix company), as a powerful, yet proprietary Unix lured users away, these
leading Unix vendors took the only reasonable option. Instead of sitting
passively by while AT&T and Sun lived happily ever after, they decided to
make their OWN Unix....

        Hence the Open Software Foundation, an independent corporation

funded by its supporters that would devise a comprehensive Unix standard
covering the areas of graphical user interfaces, enhancements to Unix, and
other aspects of Unix. After development of their platform, the OSF would
back it up with the things that they felt were lacking from AT&T. These
things included:

> 1) Reasonable, stable licensing terms
> 2) A vendor-neutral decision process
> 3) Equal vendor influence in (and access to) specifications
> 4) A hardware-independent Unix standard that would evolve
>   in a quicker, more rational fashion than AT&T Unix had.

Also, when the OSF's alternate Unix standard has been developed, all
of the OSF's member companies will migrate their entire Unix product line
to it, in order to further support it. And as each member of the OSF has
a greater share of the Unix hardware market than AT&T (and the OSF is
quickly gaining new members), the united force of these Unix vendors could
be great enough to wrest control of Unix away from AT&T.

AT&T has not reacted favorably to this, ridiculing the OSF's plans,
and joining other industry analysts in taking a very dim view as to the
OSF could accomplish. But surprisingly, Sun Microsystems itself has
considered joining the OSF. In order to end all speculation about their
chances of success, the OSF immediately began development on its Unix.

First on their agenda was a standard Graphical User Interface. The
OSF's requirements in this issue were that the interface be based on
X/Windows, a standard Unix windowing system, and that the interface be
completely hardware-independent. Recently the OSF listed 26 organizations
whose products it would consider as candidates. Among the ones being
considered are Hewlett Packard (New Wave), Digital Research (X/GEM),
Microsoft (Presentation Manager), Carnegie-Mellon University, and oddly,
even Sun Microsystems' Open Look interface. Afterwards, it will consider
whether it should base its standard on an upcoming release of AIX, IBM's
version of Unix, or some other Unix dialect, like Berkeley Unix.

The OSF estimates that it will have its alternate Unix standard
complete by early 1990, while AT&T is saying that Unix Version 5.4 will be
shipping by Fall 1989. This gives AT&T (if they deliver on time) at
least eight months in which to retake the Unix market. AT&T has already
begun to do this by rallying support for Open Look, as toolkits for this
graphical interface will be available in the First Quarter of 1989. Then,
the question becomes if AT&T and Sun alone should be able to dominate the
course of Unix, as IBM/Microsoft have the course of MS-DOS, without the
help of other Unix licensees, or if a group of Unix vendors will be able
to muster great support for their Unix without AT&T.

With the advent of OS/2, the computer industry finally began to take
a look at multitasking operating systems, and noticed Unix, with its
powerful capabilities. As such, Unix has become very important, having
the potential of eventually guiding the microcomputer industry into the
21st Century. Now the issue is if Unix not only can overcome the MS-DOS,
Macintosh, and OS/2 alternatives, but can withstand the dissention within
its internal ranks to establish a standard worthy of such a feat....

But ponder, if you will, on these two questions:

1) What exactly are the capabilities of the Atari ST and Amiga's bus
architectures?

2) What steps do users take to replace or supplement their systems
when they become obsolete, orphaned, or don't have enough software?

                      ---=====***=====---

CPU CONFIDENTIAL REPORTâ ¢
======================

Sunnyvale, CA   American Micro Devices (AMD), a chip manufacturer, is
-------------   readying to ship versions of its 80286 chip ranging
                     from 12 MHZ to 25 MHZ. Its 16 MHZ 80286, pitted against
                     similar Intel chips, runs programs 20-25% faster than
                     Intel's 80386/SX chip, and 5-10 percent faster than a
                     full fledged 80386, as well as being half the price of
                     80386/SX chips.

                     AMD is also suing Intel because they won't allow them
                     to make a 80386 chip. A 1982 cross-licensing agreement
                     between them gives AMD the right to do so, but....

Cupertino, CA   Apple is reportedly planning to bundle AppleWorks GS,
-------------   a new version of the program made by Claris Inc., with
                     their IIgs computer, in an effort to boost sales.

Washington, DC   Rep. Wally Herger (R, California) is sponsoring a bill
--------------   in Congress that would give criminal penalties against
                     people that plant viruses in computer systems. Called
                     the Computer Virus Eradication Act, it would also bring
                     about a Federal Study into viruses.

Arlington, MA   Zortech Inc. has introduced the Zortech C++ Compiler,
-------------   which is the FIRST full implementation of the C++
                     language for microcomputers. It is a TRUE compiler,
                     (not a preprocessor) meaning that you don't have to buy
                     a C compiler in addition to Zortech C++. It supports
                     the ANSI C standard, as well as all the extensions
                     found in the C++ language. It is available for IBM
                     compatible machines. Zortech's phone number is
                     1-800-848-8408, in case you want to request that they
                     make an ST version.

                     C++ is a superset of the C language that provides full
                     object oriented programming, greater type safety, and
                     data abstraction while maintaining full compatibility
                     with C. Introduced 5 years ago, it is meant to be the
                     successor to C.

STR Reviewâ ¢
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PAGESTREAM - Version 1.5
========================

by Bill Baugh

One of the newest Desktop Publishers to hit the market is
Pagestream (Version 1.51) from Soft Logik, which is the
newest upgrade of Publishing Partner. Having never used the
older versions of Publishing Partner, I cannot do an accurate
comparison between the two. So, for the users familiar with
PP, please bear with me.

First impressions are very important. Upon opening the
shipping box, I was surprised to see the "manual in box"
arrangement found with most IBM software. This is great,
especially for large manual storage. The manual is very
concise with three tutorials ranging from the basics to
creating involved, multipage productions. Following the
tutorials is a section that takes the drop down menus and
explains in detail the varying options found within each one.
The manual has no index, but supplements with drawings of the
Pagestreams desktop with each menu pulled down and page
number corresponding to the various functions.

Pagestream comes on three, single-sided disks and does not
need to be installed as with other publishers. It is
unprotected and may be copied to floppies or to a folder on a
hard drive. It can run in either medium resolution on a
color, or high on a monochrome. It also runs independent of
GDOS, which is a major plus!

Once the program boots, you are greeted with a small title
page inside the Pagestream desktop. There are the usual drop
down menus plus a "tool box" located on the right side of the
screen. From here, such things as text, draw columns,
choose object and drawing functions are selected. Choosing
the "New document" command from under File brings up a menu
that allows the user to choose how large the working area
will be. Choices available are Letter size (8.5" x 11"),
legal, manual, tabloid, index and business card, five metric
sizes and a user definable size. You may specify whether or
not the document will be single or double sided and whether
it will run vertically or horizontally. Once your choice is
selected, you are presented with the applicable GEM window.
Under the View menu, you are able to choose how much or
little of the window you want to display on the screen.
Choices range from full page on down to zooming in at 200%.
There is a variable zoom command which lets you zoom only the
section of the screen you want instead of the entire screen.
You may also set up a User Scale which allows you to select
the size (from 15% to 1500%) and the point size of the text.

Depending upon the type of work being done, you may set up a
"Master Page" which will set the structure of every page used

in the production. Also, style sheets may be created and saved for specific pages of the manuscript. Composing is very easy too and usually more fun because you may let your creativity reign. Which ever form you decide to use, Soft Logik has provided very useful tools to help make the publishing "fast and easy".

Entering text directly to screen is as easy as clicking on the text icon in the tool box, position the pointer on screen, clicking and begin typing. Font changes may be made by either going under the Style menu or pressing Control-F. There are ten fonts available with sizing ranging from 1/3600th of an inch to 18.2 inches. Additional fonts may be purchased through Soft-logik. Fonts are not loaded during the boot of the program, but must be loaded when they are chosen. This causes delays due to disk access time, but also saves memory that may be used for the manuscript. Full editing features are included such as cut and paste as well as a search and replace function. Also included are differing styles for the fonts such as backslant, shadow and underline to name a few. Fonts may not look especially good (as with a color monitor) when used at differing point sizes. This is due to the simple algorithm used for screen output. The more complex algoirthm is used for printing output, where the smoothness of the fonts is quite impressive. Text may be imported from word processors such as Word Writer ST, First Word or Word Perfect. ASCII files may be imported as well. The actual importation of the text is kind of round-about in that columns must be created and formatted from a menu in which the text is going to reside. It is fairly time consumming, but as you get more familiar with the program, it becomes easier.

Another time consumming aspect of the program is the Importing of graphics. You are able to import Bit-mapped (D.E.G.A.S.) or .IMG files (Easy Draw). The actual work time is minimal to set up the import, but the computation time is extraodinarily long. Redrawing is slow even when the picture is in memory.   I suggest either holding off till the end of the development of the document to import the graphics or, import, and have the Show Pictures command turned off.

Objects may be created using either the geometric shapes from the tool box or drawn free hand. Differing options such as having rulers, aligning with guides or grids help in the creation of these objects. Other functions, such as differing fill patterns, line styles, the ability to align differing objects to other objects in the document, duplicate, reshape and even full 360 degree rotation of objects allows the user endless variances. Once created, separate objects may be joined into a single group allowing for a more flexible working enviornment.

Included with the program are two drivers that allow the user to customize a hyphenation dictionary and spelling dictionary. These allow you to make sure breaks in words due to confined columns occur correctly and spelling may be checked throughout the entire document. Also included are, an accessory found under the Desk menu which shows the amount of memory being used and the amount free, plus a full

compliment of disk commands found under the File menu.

        Finally, the most important feature of the program, the
        hardcopy. Page formatting is done in memory and is
        relatively quick. A menu is available which allows you to
        select number of copies, print density, print size
        (15-10,000%), transparency, write white (like a photo
        negative), thumbnails, which allow small print-outs for a
        quick overview and color separations which affect the grey
        scaling for normal, black ribbon printers. The printout is
        fantastic! The ability to change the density and grey scales
        makes for great effects and makes the document more
        professional looking.

        Pagestream is a great program that offers a full line of
        desktop publishing features, with an "easy to use"
        environment plus a good price. If these features interest you,
        I highly recommend this program.

STR Reviewâ ¢
==========

                              FALCON F-16
                              ===========

PART II

by Richard Bennett

        Falcon which was introduced just before Christmas 1987, captured
three of the Software Publisher's Awards for Top Software of the Year.

        A little over twenty man-years went into the design and development
of the original Falcon to create a realistic but playable F-16 simulation.
The playerbecomes the pilot, facing the controls, heads-up-displays (HUDS)
and radar, which have been updated to conform to current avionics of the
F-16A. The fasted paced action of the game includes twelve missions and
varies from air to ground bombing runs to dogfighting as many as three
enemy MiGs at a time.

        One of the most outstanding features of the game is the ability to
go head-to-head against an opponent on a second computer. Using either
direct connect or a 12oo baud or faster modem, players can link one ST to
anotherST, to an Amiga or Mac that will leave pounding hearts and sweaty
palms!

        Five graduated levels of difficulty from 1st Lt. to Colonel make
Falcon very player friendly. It gives the novice pilot a chance to learn
to fly at the lowest level without fear of crashing or being shot down,
while even accomplished pilots are being challenged by the highest levels
of play. At Colonel level, the simulation takes on the flight

characteristics of the real F-16, allowing complicated maneuvers such as
the Immelmann, yo-yos, loops and scissors while subjecting the pilots to
such flying problems as blackouts from pulling too many Gs.

Another unique feature of Falcon is the "Black Box" for recording
the plane's path and that of any MiGs in the area. This allows the player
the power of "instant replay" for analyzing performance after a dogfight
with the enemy.

The program has realistic sounds and the visual appeal is enhanced
by the use of true 3d graphics. (no glasses needed) There are four HUDs,
three of which appear depending upon weapon selection and the fourth is
for landing the aircraft. Heat seeking and Maverick missiles, bombs and
machine guns comprise the complete weapons system.

Dazzling extra features of the game include four cockpit views and
views from the tower, chase plane or satellite. There are zoom-in and
zoom-out target views. ST Falcon has advanced electronics/radar systems
and a digitized voice (Bitchin' Betty) warning system. Trucks (moving)
provide targets that are a new air to ground challenge for the game.

--------=====**=====---

Falcon F-16 <> Observations of a casual game player...

by Myles Goddard

You might call me an average game player, well actually I guess I'm
somewhat below average because when I do play a computer game I get killed
or worse within the first five minutes. What does this have to do with
the excellent combat simulator " FALCON "? Well, for one thing, I believe
there are far more " average " computer users who share the same fate as
I do when playing these fast games and simulators. Therefore, when I say
that this terrific game gives me a fighting chance I mean it. An example
of this is the HELP key. I usually get myself into a spin and with my
so-so joystick I usually crash but when I hit HELP, the plane straightens
itself out and I'm flying level again.

Before I get into my review of the actual workings of the program, I
would like to mention the sound effects of FALCON. I have a pair of 10w
stereo speakers hooked up to my ST via Monitor Master. When these are
turned on and my FALCON is ready for take off, it sounds just like I am
sitting in a real jet. The built-in speaker of the ST doesn't do justice
to the fine digitized sound effects. I highly recommend that an external
amp and speakers be purchased if for nothing else than to take advantage
of the excellent sound effects that are being put into the newest ST
software. Enough of that, now let's get ourselves ready for some serious
aerial combat.

Falcon is one of the most authentic flight/combat simulations made
today. It contains all kinds of manuever options that are actually used
in the U.S. Air Force combat simulators. Falcon's graphics are outstanding
and the digitized voices are realistic too. You have numerous options
pertaining to the graphics displays, sound, scenarios and modem selections.
By hooking up through your modem, you can have dogfights with your friends
who have Amigas, ST's or Macintosh's. I haven't had the chance to try out
these options though but I'm sure it is fun as heck. If you are a bad
pilot like me you can hit Control D and the thing will fly for you. While
in this mode it is easy to go after the enemy. Here's what I do, I set up

a scenario with three MIGS. I check my armament then go to the take-off
mode. By hitting the " + " key it sends life into the engines and be
sure to take off the wheel and air brakes (B & W Keys). From there just
sit back and watch your mighty jet take off.

        By the way, you should set your input device before you take off,
it makes it a whole lot easier. You have the choice of Mouse, Keyboard or
Joystick. I use the joystick option because it is more realistic. Anyway,
after doing this and I'm in the air, I hit the ESC key, which brings up
the drop down option windows. I select "Engage" and Zap there is a MIG
in my sights. Needless to say, it is too late for him. Press SPACE and
he has a sidewinder hot on his tail. Try to turn your jet in pursuit
and watch the missile fly up the tailpipe and blow up. The explosion
sound effects are super and if you're quick you might see the damaged plane
careening down towards the earth. You might even catch a parachute if
you look closer.

      After spending some time with this program you might get brave and
try out a more advanced level. Better be careful, at the higher levels,
those harmless MIGS are piloted by ACES and believe me these guys know
what they are doing. You also have ground targets if you like that kind
of action. You can attack bridges, airfields, AA sites and of course the
enemy's HQ. The choices are yours and if you want realism, its here.
Take a look at the cockpit. Every instrument is there in fine detail. The
Heads Up Display (HUD) shows all the pertinent information like "G" force
indicator, Heading scale, airspeed indicator, AOA (Angle of Attack),
landing gear, etc. It's a wonder how they were able to put so much
realism into a computer program like this. I didn't mention the many,
many other features this fine piece of software has. After all, you
wouldn't want me to tell the end of a good mystery story and spoil it for
you would you?

      I would rate Falcon as one of the best programs out for the ST and
it certainly rates right up there with Dungeon Master and Oids. It is
well worth the money so I encourage everyone to purchase this program and
support Spectrum Holobyte Company. By doing this, we will encourage more
high quality software development for the ST.

STR Reviewâ ¢
==========

                          NEODESK 2.0
                          ===========

by William Y. Baugh

      NeoDesk 2.0 is the newest upgrade of a spectacular program from
Gribnif Software that allows the user to replace the Atari GEM Desktop with
an amazing "alternative", retaining all of the usual GEM functions plus a

large array of extras DRI never thought of.

        For the readers not familiar with NeoDesk, it is a separate desktop
that loads in after the GEM desktop has loaded, taking up around 120K of
memory (more on this later). It automatically senses which drives are
active; so on the initial boot, all drive icons needed are present. The
groups of drive icons actually resemble their name sakes and can be edited
through an included icon editor program to suit the users tastes. The user
may then set up the desktop how they like it, just like in GEM and save out
a file similar to a "Save Desktop" command. If you are using a color and
monochrome, you must set up a different desktop for each monitor.

        When opening a window, you are initially presented with the files
in icon mode. The icons for files, like the drive icons, are each unique
for their respective groups. These may also be edited by using the editor
program. In the first version of NeoDesk, "View as icons" was the only
available option. With the new 2.0 version, you alos have "View as text"
which allows the user have the displayed text the same size as on the
normal GEM desktop or as "small text" which allows you to fit much more
into a window and is still very readable. Also under the view options is
the ability to select whether or not you want to display the size of the
file, the date the file was transferred and the time. This feature is
great as with most people I know, (especially with hard drives) are trying
to keep the window as small as possible. With these small windows, most of
these displays, with the exception of the size, go unnoticed. This is a
nice option because Gribnif put in a strange feature in that the box
outline of the file or files being dragged is as large as what is being
represented in the window. So if you are displaying every feature (Name,
size, date and time) but only the name and size are showing, the box
stretches beyond the boundaries of your window to incorporate the other
features. This does not interfere with the functioning of the program, it
is just annoying. One other great feature under View is the ability to
have more than one column in a window. It really works well if you use
just the name of the file and "Small text" in a normal size window. This
will display two columns; with a larger window even more. It will do as
many columns as size available inside the window.

        Included on the disk are two accessories, NeoDesk control panel and
printer queue. The control panel works just like Atari's with some
modifications. You are able to change the time and date, turn the Blitter
on or off, turn on a screen saver (saves you from running an accessory),
set the sensitivity and speed of a repeating key plus the total memory size
of your machine and the available memory (This can also be found in the
"About NeoDesk",under the fuji symbol). The printer queue comes in handy
because you are not able to print an ASCII file directly from desktop. If
you double-click on a file, you are not asked whether you would like to
show, print or cancel. All printing is handled through the print queue.

        Under the File menu are the normal options usually found in GEM.
The ability to open or close windows and folders, create a new folder and
the show information command. The show info is a little more expanded with
the number of sides, tracks, sectors and bytes/sector also displayed. From
this menu, you may also put a volume name on your drives or disk.
Formatting is also found under this menu, with the new "Mega twist"
supported.

        The next menu is Sort which allows the user to select in what order
they want to view their files. Included under this menu are "Sort by
name", "Sort by date", "Sort by size", "Sort by type" and "No sort". The
last option, "Select template", allows the user to sort the current

windows' files by any extender and only these files will be displayed.

Under the options menu is first, the "Install desktop icon" which, like GEM, allows the user to install drive and other icons. This is followed by an interesting option, "Install application", which allows a data file to be double clicked, thus loading into the application that it was created on. This is great for word processors in that you may click on the data file anywhere without actually having to go into the program first, then loading the needed file. Next is the "Edit environment" feature that is useful for Mark Williams C programmers in that it allows the programmer to compile their program from NeoDesk. The "Set preferences" menu is next; this is where NeoDesk really earns its reputation. You are presented with a menu that allows the user to choose, first, whether or not when dragging a file if you want the mode to be copy, move or ask. The copy mode everyone is familiar with. The move mode on the other hand allows the user when dragging a file to physically move the file from one drive to another. No more copying the files and then going back and erasing them from the source drive. The ask feature will probably be the most used in that most people will not strictly use copy or move always. During the copy/move you are asked to confirm the decision by another alert box which also includes the number of files and folders being transferred. In the menu, if you set "Confirm copies/moves" to no, then this box does not appear, thus leaving you in the dark on how many files are transferring. Under the "Set preferences", no mention of changing resolutions is available since NeoDesk will not run in low res and you must reboot into high res, with a totally separate desktop. Also included are two commands "Pause after TOS applications" and "Use master to execue". The "Pause" commands NeoDesk to pause after all TOS and TTP files have executed to retain data that otherwise may be lost. The "Use master" command is another major upgrade from version 1.0 in that when a program is executed, NeoDesk will reside in a 25K shell. This means that, upon leaving the executed program, NeoDesk most reload itself from the disk. This saves memory, but slows things down a bit. If you select no in the "Use master" option, this will not occur, but will leave NeoDesk resident in memory. Following the Preferences menu are the "Save desktop" and "Print desktop". Both are self-explanatory.

The features don't stop here. Other nice features of NeoDesk are first, the ability to do all commands from the keyboard. This feature is very nice for folks who get tired of going to the drop-down menus constantly. Second, the ability to change file names by just holding down the control key and clicking on the file. Third, the ability to change folder names. This is accomplished in a fairly round-about way in that you must move the folder in the same window, an alert box appears saying there is a conflict (two identical names). Only at this point are you able to change the name. The problem with this feature is that you have to copy all info out of the old folder into the new one and erase the old. It's can take some time depending upon the size of the folder. The next feature has to do with the rubberband box; you can move it in both directions! Other, smaller features, include a scrollable item bar that sits just below the drive letter. This allows you to scroll through the information when using small windows. Gribnif also included a "send to back" icon that comes in handy if there are numerous windows on the screen at one time. Last but not by any means least is the ability to take a program, no matter how nested it is or on what drive it resides on and drag it out upon the desktop. From the desktop, these icons may be double-clicked and the program will execute. This is fantastic for hard disk owners who often use programs that are buried within multiple folders.

NeoDesk is an excellent alternative to the original desktop, one

that I use everytime I use my computer. But, I do not recommend this for
everyone. If you are a 520 ST user, with a floppy, the memory constraints
would be too great to use NeoDesk to its full potential. Also, I feel that
the program is most useful for users with hard drives. With a hard drive,
the program may be used with the most ease and allows user more freedom in
using NeoDesk. If you meet these requirements are not currently using
NeoDesk, then I strongly recommend that you check out this product, I think
you'll be very pleased with the performance, appearance and functionality
of this fine program.

STR Featureâ ¢

                        PUBLISH! - UNFAIR!!
                        ===================

by Gregg Anderson

                    An open letter to PUBLISH! magazine.

: 01/17/89 :

To: Editor, PUBLISH! Magazine
     501 Second Street.
     San Francisco, CA 94107

Sir;

     I had been looking forward to a review of the Atari Mega4 DTP
system from your magazine for some time and purchased the December issue
when it arrived here in Rapid City, SD. I was expecting a balanced and
honest assessment of the Mega4 DTP such as the one done by 'Personal
Publishing' a few months ago. I guess I had expected too much, because
what I read both surprised and disappointed me. Within that article I
found omissions, misstatements, and misinformation.

     I fully realize that any reviewer is entitled to personal opinions
on any product he or she may review, but an honest review requires an
honest and unbiased approach. Unfortunately, Mr Kobler appears to have
neglected these rules. At best his article was both misleading and
hopelessly out of date. I'm not sure what the author's 'hidden agenda'
for this article was, but if it was to mislead the reader then he
succeeded marvelously.

It's because of these errors and 'out of date' remarks that I felt
compelled to write this rebuttal and offer a more accurate and 'up to
date' appraisal of the Atari Mega4 system vis-a-vie your December issue.

    In case you question my qualifications in this matter, please allow
me to list them. I have been an Atari Computer user since 1982 and
purchased my first ST in 1986. I currently own and operate a Mega4 DTP
system, such as that reviewed by Mr Kobler. I produce a monthly 12-16
page newsletter (RACE Tracks) and generate all my duty related (USAF)
material with it. I am active on all major Atari-related BBSs
(Compuserve, Delphi, and GEnie) and regularly write articles for STLog,
Current Notes, and other Atari-related magazines. I am also a Beta-Tester
for several 3rd party Atari products and am in regular contact with many
of the more capable 3rd party developers for the Atari ST system.

    To simplify my rebuttal I shall list Mr Kobler's statements and
offer a more accurate response of the current situation.

    STATEMENT:

     Would you buy a DTP system that runs neither Macintosh or DOS
     software?

    RESPONSE:

     The Mega series DOES run both DOS and Mac software. A
     3rd party product called PC:DITTO (around $80) has proven to be
     more compatible with MS-DOS software than most inexpensive clones.
     Though currently slower than a PC-XT (it's software based), Avant-
     Garde is replacing it this quarter with PC:DITTO II, a full-speed
     4.7Mhz emulator. There is also a hardware emulator being released
     by Paradox which is a 'stand alone' unit that plugs into the back
     of the ST.

    The ST already has IBM standard RS-232 and Parallel interfaces and
thus, unlike the Mac, utilizes industry standard peripherals such as
printers, modems, and scanners. Also, and again unlike the Mac, the ST is
able to access MS-DOS formatted disks 'out of the box'. This allows you
to load, use, and save most IBM data/text files with your ST software.

    As for Macintosh emulation, the ST has TWO emulators available, the
Magic Sac and Spectre 128. Both are actually faster in operation (by up
to 20%) than either the Mac+ or the Mac SE and have proven as software
compatible as the Mac SE itself (and more compatible than the Mac II). To
access Mac disks directly there is the Translator from Data Pacific and
the soon to be released 'GCR' from 'Gadgets by Small', makers of the
Spectre 128 (which uses 128k ROMs to run the newest Mac software,
including Hypercard).

    I doesn't end there though. OS-9/ST was released several years ago
for the ST series and there has been a clone of the UNIX operating system
available for some time now. For the hobbist   there are even public
domain CPM and Atari XE emulators. In short, the ST is capable of running
or emulating more different computer operating systems than any other
computer currently in existence.

    STATEMENT:

The ST comes from a company best known for video games and home
computers?

RESPONSE:

Mr Kobler uses the expression 'home computer' several
times when talking about the ST series, attempting to lump it
together with such systems as the C-64, Apple II, and other 8-bit
home systems. The ST is as much a true Personal Computer as the
PC-AT and Mac SE, offering similar or superior speed, power, and
performance. Granted, Atari got its start with Video games, but
implying that game systems are all they know how to make is like
saying General Motors is limited to Vegas and Chevettes. This has
been a common and favorite position of 'Atari-Bashers' for many
years and I had expected better than that from your magazine.

STATEMENT:

There is no internal hard disk drive model.

RESPONSE:

Supra, long a maker of outstanding hard drives and
modems for several computers, has high speed (28ms) 30 & 40Meg
internal hard disks for the Mega series. As rule though, most ST
owners tend to prefer external hard disk systems, especially ones
like the Megafile30/FA-ST designs that can sit under the computer
or serve as a monitor stand. Speaking of which, neither the SH205
nor the Megafile 20 are currently manufactured, they have been
replaced by the Megafile 30 at the same price as the original
SH205/Megafile 20.

    Not mentioned in the article is that the ST has one of the fastest
hard disk data transfer rates in the industry due, among other reasons, to
its standard 1:1 interleave and the use of a DMA port rather than the
slower SCSI interface. Transfer speeds of 600-700 bytes per second are
not unusual with Supra's RLL drives (matching most Mac II and '386
systems) and the port is capable of supporting speeds of up to 1.2
Megabytes per second.

STATEMENT:

The low resolution makes both color modes undesirable for laying
out pages.

RESPONSE:

I agree that the 640 X 200 pixel display of medium
resolution (similar to a CGA display but clearer) is less than
perfect for DTP. Still, it is more usable than the author
implies. Generally speaking, the RGB monitor was intended for
entertainment, general business applications, and word processing
use, not for serious DTP. The 640 x 400 pixel display of the
monochrome monitor, however, is outstanding. It provides a rock-
solid display with a higher resolution, a larger screen and a
generally clearer image than the Macintosh's and does so without
the flickering interlace mode used by some systems' high-res
modes.

Remember, the SC1224 is only an option for this system, the
monochrome monitor is included with the Mega4 DTP package. Something else
to remember is that color is an option not even available on the Mac
(excepting the very expensive Mac II) and an extra-cost upgrade for most
MS-DOS clones.

    STATEMENT:

     At present no Mega4 software works with slide recorders or can
     drive color printers at a resolution higher than 75 DPI.

    RESPONSE:

     There is a package that allows the ST to work with
     color slide recorders. Neriki Image Master offers Polaroid
     Palette software to transfer computer images to 35mm slides,
     prints, and transparencies. If all you're doing are simple screen
     dumps from the low-resolution display (320 x 200 pixels) then
     72DPI is indeed the limit. However, a properly written GDOS
     printer driver will easily drive any printer, color or otherwise,
     to the maximum resolution it's capable of. Also, PageStream 1.5
     provides color PostScript support.

    STATEMENT:

     (the SLM804) loses some quality in fine text and hairlines.

    RESPONSE:

     On some of the earliest GDOS drivers this was true, but
     newer drivers were released some time ago that corrected this.
     Other programs such as Pagestream and Calamus never suffered from
     this problem.

    STATEMENT:

     (the SLM804) has no processor or memory .... so the Mega4 gives up
     at least a megabyte to do the printer's thinking.

    RESPONSE:

     Basically true, but this still leaves an easy 3
     megabytes of RAM free for your program to operate in, far more
     than any other similarly priced 'out of the box' computer system.
     It also simplifies the task of emulating other printer modes since
     emulators can be done in software and loaded into your computer as
     needed. Already there are Diablo 630 and Epson FX emulators
     available and the Ultrascript PostScript clone should be available
     by the time this is published. A second advantage of the Mega4
     DTP system is that unless the printer driver has been loaded, all
     four megabytes of your RAM are available for use, while any RAM
     installed in a 'standard' laser printer is useless unless actively
     printing. A third advantage is printing speed. While many
     printers advertise 8 to 11 pages per minute, this is only for
     copies of the document already in their RAM. Data transfer times,
     even on PostScript systems, greatly extend printing times well

beyond what most laser manufactures claim. By creating the entire
page within its own memory and transmitting it as a raster scan
directly to the printer via the high-speed DMA bus, the Mega4 DTP
easily outspeeds systems costing many times its suggested retail
price. Print times on simple ASCII documents generally match the
competition, but when attempting to print 300 DPI graphics there's
no comparison. What can take 30-45 minutes to print out on an HP
LaserJet is usually finished in less than 3 minutes on the SLM804.
With PostScript the times are closer, but still longer than the
Atari's. The only exception to this is the original Publishing
Partner which was rather slow with the SLM804, though still faster
than a LaserJet.

STATEMENT:

 There's no page description language to build your pages either:
 that's up to the application you're running.

RESPONSE:

 The author seems to assume that everyone has to have a
 PostScript system and that your page description language must be
 'built in' to the basic system. With 4 Meg of available RAM this
 is not a requirement as you have more than enough memory to load
 and use any system you desire, be it PostScript or whatever. In
 any case, Ultrascript (estimated cost $300) will satisfy this
 perceived 'shortcoming' and Calamus Plus (due in April) will
 support both PostScript and its own page description language.

STATEMENT:

 Only about 12 font families are available for each (GDOS &
 Publishing Partner).

RESPONSE:

 Totally false! There are literally dozens of different
 GDOS and P.Partner fonts available for the ST. These are easily
 found on any of the various Atari-related BBSs and mail order
 houses. Also, these fonts are FAR less expensive (direct purchase
 or share-ware) than their PostScript counterparts. In addition,
 GDOS fonts (including the Diablo emulator fonts) are easily
 created or modified with a package called Fontz! from Neocept
 while Publishing Partner includes its own font editor.

STATEMENT:

 (Not a quote) The author attacks Timework's DeskTop Publisher and
 other software packages as lacking in features.

RESPONSE:

 I agree that while modeled on Ventura Publisher,
 Timework's DTP (virtually identical to 'Publish It' on the IBM)
 was designed as an entry-level DTP package and does lack some of
 Ventura's more advanced features. Still, when you compare a $600
 program to a $130 program you must expect some differences.

Timeworks' provides 90% of Ventura's features and power for about
22% of its price. A reasonable tradeoff in my opinion. The new
PageStream package easily fills in as a mid-level DTP system (with
PostScript support) and Calamus (ignored in the review though
available to reviewers last year and released several months ago)
is a high-level DTP program that in the 'standard' package
generally matches both Ventura and PageMaker and should easily
outpower them in the 'Plus' version (due for release in April).
This package offers all the features, including full PostScript
support, that even the most dedicated DeskTop Publishing addict
could desire and even has built-in support for several industry
standard scanners.

   Generally speaking, you'll find that most Atari-related software
usually matches that offered for the 'brand names' and in some cases even
exceeds them. Better yet, it usually does so at a much lower price. As
for WordUp, I'd like to know what 'sophisticated' features it's supposed
to be missing. At $80 it competes with MacWrite (around $300 retail) and
is fully compatible with 3rd party spell checkers such as Thunder!. Also,
 Mr Kobler's comments about Word Perfect 4.1 are applicable to ALL
computers with that version, not just the one released for the Atari ST as
he implies.

   STATEMENT:

    No program lets you create editable Bezier curves, nor can you
    trace over an imported, bit-mapped image to turn it into
    object-oriented art.

   RESPONSE:

    Touch Up, from Migraph, has no difficulty editing
    Bezier curves and is one of the finest graphics editing tools
    available for the ST. As for tracing over an imported bit-mapped
    image, I know of only two programs capable of doing this and these
    are both on the Mac. Yet the author implies that these are
    features common to all IBM/Mac DTP programs. In any case, both
    are features of more use in CAD/CAM software rather than in DTP
    applications and didn't appear until well after the Macintosh had
    been released (software for the ST is only now entering its second
    generation).

   STATEMENT:

    You can't save images in gray-scale format: You're stuck with
    halftones that use fixed-dot patterns and don't take advantage of
    high-resolution typesetters.

   RESPONSE:

    Incorrect! Navarone assures me that their scanner is
    capable of saving and printing (on the 804) up to 32 gray-scales
    with no difficulty what ever (though the screen display is
    halftone/fixed dot). As for high-resolution typesetters, Atari
    and Compugraphics are currently finishing DeskSet, a joint project
    which interfaces the Mega DTP system with the Compugraphic
    typesetting system to provide a low-cost (relatively speaking),
    ultra-high resolution professional printing and publishing system.

Additionally, Calamus Plus will interface directly into the
Linotronic publishing system with its own page description
language and licenced Compugraphic fonts.

STATEMENT:

 There are no accelerator boards to pep up its (the ST) 8 Mhz
 processor.

RESPONSE:

 Currently correct, though an 8 Mhz 68000 is generally
 more capable than an 8 Mhz 80286 and the ST does utilize a
 dedicated 'blitter' support chip for faster data movement. Still,
 there are several accelerator boards currently 'in development'
 from 3rd party developers that are expected to be released
 shortly.

STATEMENT:

 Graphics cards that add more colors or pixels to the display are
 unavailable as well.

RESPONSE:

 Also currently correct, though both Atari and 3rd party
 developers are expected to release such expansion boards/systems
 later this year. Not that these developments are desperately
 needed though. The current 640 x 400 display is quite sufficient
 for 95% of DTP needs and the Moniterm's 1280 x 960 pixel display
 should satisfy the remaining 5%. Though of limited interest to
 DTP users, there are software packages that extend the ST's color
 pallet and allow the display of up to 512 actual colors at one
 time (Spectrum 512) and simulate 24,000 colors through the use of
 dithering (Digispect).

STATEMENT:

 You can't tie the Mega4 into a network.

RESPONSE:

 Currently true here in the USA, though there are
 several LANs available in Europe and one under development by
 Atari USA. There is also an Ethernet being developed in Canada
 for the ST series.

STATEMENT:

 You might be able to live with the Mega4's functional limitations,
 but there's no reason to settle for its price... You get too little
 for too much.

RESPONSE:

 Now we get into some interesting numbers. Mr Kobler is

attempting to directly compare a full list price Mega4 DTP system
with a mail ordered Macintosh system and a IBM PC-AT clone of
questionable compatibility and dubious durability. Let's list
some actual prices (from phone calls to various dealers and
reputable mail order houses around the country). I selected the
following systems to insure the greatest similarity of features
and performance.

MEGA4:
======

     Basically the same system reviewed by Mr Kobler, updated to current
specifications. Though not encouraged to do so by Atari, most Atari
dealers offer substantial discounts on the Mega system, either on a
part-by-part basis or on entire systems. The prices listed in the
'real-world' chart are direct price quotes from one of their more
successful dealerships. Since the author insists on comparing the package
to top-level Mac & PC-AT packages (PageMaker & Ventura), I'll use Calamus
with the Mega rather than Timeworks' DTP. The Mega 'Total' prices
includes (mono) for the standard high-res monitor only or (both) which
includes both mono and RGB monitors.

AT CLONE:
=========

     The Citizen Mate/12 is an OS/2 compatible turbo AT clone that comes
'out of the box' with an EGA board and monitor (extra cost on most
clones), serial & parallel ports, mouse port, and 1 Meg of RAM. When
dealing with IBM clones, it's important to remember that when you pay for
junk, you get junk. Thus I did not include some of the more basic (read
no RAM, ports, or graphics cards) 'build-it-yourself' 286 clones you see
advertised for what seem like impossible prices.

MACINTOSH:
==========

     The Mac SE (with internal 20 Meg hard disk) was selected because it
is the only Macintosh capable of competing with either the ST or a turbo
286 in performance due to its redesigned OS and improved bus interleave.

     With both the Macintosh SE and Citizen 12/Mate I've included a 2.5
to 3 Megabyte RAM upgrade to bring them up to the level of an SLM804
equipped Mega4 system. As most RAM upgrades are done at the user level,
the listed price in both charts is 'mail order' and not 'dealer/retail
level'.

PRINTERS:
=========

     The BlaserStar II was selected as an outstanding but affordable 8
page-per-minute HP clone that comes with multiple emulations and 1Meg of
RAM 'out of the box'. Cheaper lasers are available but not of the type or
quality needed for serious use.   Something else to keep in mind is that
'standard' lasers with less than 1 Meg of RAM are limited to simple ASCII
printouts only, a minimum of 1 Meg of internal RAM is required for any
graphics printing.

     Though there are one or two 'quickdraw' lasers available, their
prices tend to be only slightly lower than Apple's own printers so my

price chart uses the Laserwriter II series. For the Mac system I selected
the Apple Laserwriter II SC for quick- draw use and the Laserwriter II NTX
for PostScript printing. For non-Apple PostScript printing I've chosen
the least expensive PostScript laser I could find in the pages of
'Computer Shopper', the NEC LC-890.

SUGGESTED RETAIL PRICES

	Atari Mega4 DTP	Mac SE	Citizen Mate/12
Computer	$2400	$3569	$3279
30Meg HD	$ 890	included (20Meg)	included (40 Meg)
Mouse	included	included	see windows
Graphic Interface	GEM included	Finder included	$250 Windows
2Meg RAM upgrade	4Meg included	$799 2.5 Meg total	$798 3 Meg total
Laser, non PostScript	$2000 included	$2799 Laserwriter II SC	$2400 BlaserStar II
Laser, PostScript	$300(est) Ultrascript	$6599 Laserwriter II NTX	$4795 NEC LC 890
Cables	included	included	$30
DTP S/W Title:	$299 Calamus	$559 Pg Maker	$895 Ventura Pub
Total, non- PostScript	$5,589 (mono) $5,989 (both)	$7,726	$7,652
Total, PostScript	$5,889 (est,mono) $6,289 (est,both)	$11,526	$10,047

REAL-WORLD SELLING PRICES

	Atari Mega4 DTP	Mac SE	Citizen Mate/12
Computer	$1895	$2865	$2188
30Meg HD	$ 690	included (20Meg)	included (40 Meg)
Mouse	included	included	see windows
Graphic Interface	GEM included	Finder included	$169 Windows
2Meg RAM	4Meg	799	$798

upgrade	included	2.5 Meg total	3 Meg total
Laser, non PostScript	$1499 included	$2400 Laserwriter II SC	$1800 BlaserStar II
Laser, PostScript	$275 (est) Ultrascript	$5500 Laserwriter II NTX	$3245 NEC LC890
Cables	included	included	$30
DTP S/W Title:	$210 Calamus	$359 Pg Maker	$519 Ventura Pub
Total, non PostScript	$4,294 (mono) $4,619 (both)	$6,423	$5,504
Total, PostScript	$4,569 (est,mono) $4,894 (est,both)	$9,523	$6,949

I've not included shipping, insurance, or any of the other minor 'charges' involved in mail ordering this much hardware. It's a safe assumption, however, that these would run between $100 and $200 for an entire system.

Ignoring the 'retail' prices and going directly to the 'real- world' prices, we see a price advantage for the Mega over the Mac SE of $2,129 in non-PostScript form and an estimated $4,954 difference in the ultrascript/PostScript package. In case you're wondering, substituting the Mac SE with a Mac+ would not come close to making up the price difference while loosing ground in the area of performance.

The Mega's price advantage over the PC-AT clone is smaller, but still very real. $1,210 in non-PostScript and an estimated $2,380 in the ultrascript/PostScript version. (reduce those figures by $325 if you also want the Atari RGB monitor).

Note, the discount prices I've listed for the Mac system are going to be VERY hard to find anymore. Like Atari, Apple has closed off the mail order industry for most of its products and they are now available only at retail outlets at retail prices.

Though not mentioned in the article, the entire Mega4 DTP system (Mega4, SLM804, Megafile20, Timeworks' DTP & other software packages) had been available for the total package price of $3,995. For some reason the article (though apparently written during that time period) made no mention of that fact and was not printed until the special offer had ended.

So there you have it. The Mega4 system holds a major price advantage over the Macintosh SE system and an effective 286 AT clone in both suggested retail and 'real world' prices. In the area of performance, when comparing it with software of similar power, the systems compare very favorably with each other. Though it is no doubt possible to 'slap together' a cheap clone system at lower prices, I seriously doubt such a kludge would be able to meet the compatibility, durability, and performance demands of serious DTP nearly as well as the three systems I've listed here.

With that I will close this open letter, in the hopes that I have

done something positive to correct the errors in your December issue and
to give you cause to re-examine your position on the Atari Mega4 DTP
system. Until such time as this occurs, I am returning the December issue
of Publish! I purchased and will avoid your magazine until I see some
evidence of a more open and realistic appraisal of the Atari alternative
to DTP.

     Unfortunately, I suspect that any such change will be a rather long
time in coming. I base this on your January issue which contained a
review (by a different author) of the Amiga 2000. The Amiga is a system
designed for outstanding color graphics and desktop video but somewhat
limited in its DTP potential. Within the article the author laments over
an impressive list of shortcomings with the Amiga as a DTP system, these
included: a shortage of DTP software, the lack of downloadable fonts,
limited PostScript support, the absence of true scanner support, no object
oriented paint software for DTP, the machine's inability to print graphics
at a higher resolution than its screen display, the slow screen re-draws,
and the annoying flicker of the 'high resolution' display. Despite these
problems (far greater in number and seriousness than those listed for the
Mega4 DTP), the Amiga is still given a higher rating than the Atari
system. I find this contradiction puzzling, but typical of 'mainline'
publications that can't get the 2600 game system out of their heads.

                              Sincerly:

                              Gregg Anderson

ST REPORT CONFIDENTIALâ ¢
=====================

> St. Louis, MO   *** CIS and SOFTLOGIK offer PAGESTREAM! ***

     A daring, but absolutely marvelous marketing move, has been put
together that really shows honest to goodness concern for the Userbase.
CIS and Softlogik will offer Pagestream Ver. 1.5 through the CIS Fora for
the amazing introductory price of 129.95!!   Folks, get 'em while they're
hot!

> Sunnyvale, CA   *** FEDERATED SOLD? ***

     Although Atari has been keeping this under wraps, (why?) we now have
obtained the same information from no less than five different reliable
sources. With the proceeds from the sale, and if they win the lawsuit,

Atari could quite possibly come out of this debacle way ahead.....

> Sunnyvale, CA   ***** NO NEW INFORMATION AT THIS TIME *****

        This is the 'official' reason given for the cancellation of the
Developer's meeting. Seems to this reporter it may have been wiser to
have the meeting, spring for the fancies and walk away with a "goodwill"
meeting to be remembered. Besides, plenty of good could come from the
Developers thinking that Atari cares and having the opportunity to meet
each other...(my opinion only)

> Winter Park, FL   *** TurboST DOUBLES Speed of Swift Calc ***

        According to W. Buckholdt, of Softrek, TurboST will double the speed
and overall performance of a number of programs including Timework's
SwiftCalc...this author found that TurboST ver 1.4 works just fine with
Calamus and Pagestream v 1.5...

> Federal Way, WA   *** MIGRAPH SHIPS "DONGLED" TOUCH-UP ***

        Migraph is shipping Touch-up and for the first time in the long line
of EXCELLENT software, Easy Draw etc...., Migraph has resorted to using
copy protection!! IT comes in the form of a DONGLE connected to the
printer port. This is a bad sign, can you imagine ALL the productivity
software appearing with protection of some type or another?

> St.Louis, MO   ***** PAGESTREAM Version 1.5 WORKS!! *****

        The latest upgrade release for PAGESTREAM, version 1.5, is going to
establish this program as the "bread and butter" Desk Top Publishing
program for the majority of the users. This upgrade has eliminated 99% of
the problems experienced with earlier versions. Pagestream is now,
without a doubt, a very serious contender for the DTP market.

> Santa Clara, CA   *** ATARI HAS CHIP PLANT IN SILICON VALLEY ***

        In weak moment a certain individual let us know that the "smaller"
plant near Santa Clara, the one begun in 1983 by Warner Bros., is about to
go into full production. In addition, Atari plans to move ten thousand
machines a month through it's network of sales outlets.

> San Francisco, CA   ***** FAX for ATARI ST is HERE!! *****

        A Fax Scanner is what it is and it's planned to be fully available by
the end of February, it will be capable of speeds up to 96oo baud, and will
produce "IMG" files for the computer, Zephyr Distributing has announced the
TECO Electronics TEFAX. This is a full featured Fax system for the ST.
Software provided with the system is written especially for the ST.

> Los Angeles, CA   ***** MAC SE CANCELLED - GUPPIES BORN! *****

      The famed MAC SE is no longer in production the only machines coming
off the lines are the 68030 machines. What's a GUPPIE? ..gullable, urban,
etc.....

STR Spotlightâ ¢
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                          DONGLE DILEMMA!!
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      Much to the dismay of the members of the usergroup I attend and the
staff of STReport, we find that a leader in the productivity software
field has introduced "copy protection" of the "hardware" variety to a new
and highly touted release. Having heard the opinion of a prominent DTP
business leader in our area, he said; "I'll be darned, that Dongle will
make me crazy", I asked why and he said, "because it hooks up to the rear
of my MEGA4 and I use more than one printer ..what a pain!" He also said
he called the software publisher and they said "be careful how you use the
Dongle",.. I asked him why they would say that, he said; "because it is
damaged easily if you attempt to move it or hook it up wrong". Hopefully,
Migraph will re-evaluate their position on the "Dongle".

      Perhaps they should have asked the "others" who have tried the
DONGLE route and found it did nothing but HURT overall sales. In a
specialized application or productivity area, the documentation is only
second in importance to the program itself. I OWN the complete Easy Draw
system, (Easy Draw,SCharger,etc - Bought and Paid for) and believe me,
these intricate programs are so powerful that they require the use of the
documentation if the user wishes to obtain better than average results.

      Dongles are sad, picture a user having to either put up with 8 to
10" of dongles connected in series to both the printer and modem ports or
remove and replace the "special dongle" for each program. This is a
classic example of putting square wheels on a sleek new sports car!

      We, at STReport like to think we are a "friend" to all software
developers in the Atari ST arena. Please do not misunderstand our concern
for the legitimate user(s) and severe inconvenience placed upon the honest
user(s). Dongles make no sense to us, as we have seen them in the past in
both the 8Bit area and the 16Bit area, the only thing these clumsy items
managed to do was become a first class pain in the neck to the user!

      The worst aspect of the "Dongle Dilemma" is that it provides a

"CHALLENGE" for the hackers to make sure the Dongle becomes totally
useless. Simply put, why in heaven's name didn't Migraph make Touch-up
so DOCUMENTATION sensitive that the "book" was absolutely needed??

        Protection Schemes of any sort in application or productivity
software are a plague upon all of us even though the theory of it may be
highly principled and noble. We, the userbase must make sure it is kept to
a bare minimum or not done at all. Beside the cost of the program a user
must seriously consider the installation of a switchbox on the printer
line, or when he elects to use parallel port sensitive programs, (those
that check for the port to be in a "certain" state), he will have to
become quite good at manipulating the connectors. Try it sometime when
the ST is fully engaged, that is with all ports occupied..that rear apron
is busy! Can you imagine having to remove and reinstall this "Dongle"
when one wishes to run something different??

THIS WEEK'S 'QUOTABLE QUOTE'
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            FREUD'S FABLES
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                "Apologies are Fodder to all Egomaniacs!"

                    "1989 - ATARI'S QUEST"

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